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Record labour force participation continues

Employment and hours

The trend participation rate increased to a further record high of 65.7 per cent in April 2018, according to the latest figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

"The labour force participation rate was the highest it has been since the series began in 1978, indicating increasing attachment to the labour force," the Chief Economist for the ABS, Bruce Hockman, said.

In line with the increasing participation rate, employment increased by around 14,000 with part-time employment increasing by 8,000 persons and full-time employment by 6,000 persons in April 2018. This continued the recent slowing of employment growth, particularly full-time employment growth.

“It’s important to remember how much change there is in the labour market every month beneath a net increase of 14,000 persons. It’s actually well over 300,000 people entering employment, and more than 300,000 leaving employment in any given month,” Mr Hockman said.

Over the past year, trend employment increased by 355,000 persons or 2.9 per cent, which was above the average year-on-year growth over the past 20 years (2.0 per cent).

The trend hours worked increased by 4.7 million hours or 0.3 per cent in April 2018 and by 3.3 per cent over the past year.

Unemployment

The trend unemployment rate remained at 5.5 per cent in April 2018 after the March figure was revised down.

“The unemployment rate has continued to be relatively constrained over the past year, and is still hovering around 5.5 to 5.7 per cent”, Mr Hockman said.

States and Territories

Over the past year, the states and territories with the strongest annual growth in trend employment were New South Wales (3.8 per cent), Queensland (3.5 per cent) and the Australian Capital Territory (2.7 per cent).

Seasonally adjusted data

The seasonally adjusted number of persons employed increased by almost 23,000 persons in April 2018. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage points to 5.6 per cent, and the seasonally adjusted labour force participation rate increased slightly to 65.6 per cent.

More details are in the April 2018 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0). In addition, further information, including regional labour market information, can be found in the upcoming April 2018 issue of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001), due for release on 24 May 2018.

These publications are available for free download (after release) from the ABS website: https://www.abs.gov.au.

Media note:

- When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) must be attributed as the source.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Communications and Partnerships Section on 1300 175 070 (8.30am - 5pm Monday - Friday AEST).
- The ABS produces trend estimates to provide a more reliable indicator of the underlying behaviour of the Labour Force series. Trend estimates were introduced into the Labour Force series in the mid 1980s and are available back to February 1978. Trend estimates are considered the best indicators of the underlying behaviour in the labour market. See paragraphs 28 to 37 of the Explanatory Notes in Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0).
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